

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

2013 STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE



PRAISE TO THE FATHER — Derrick Cowan of First Church, Richland, and a mass choir of local Mississippi Baptist churches lead a standing-room-only crowd in praise and worship at the Jan. 28 evening session of the 2013 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference at First Church, Richland. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Gathering draws worshippers

By William H. Perkins
Editor

More than 1,800 people attended the events surrounding the 2013 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference Jan. 27-28 at First Church, Richland, according to Don Lum, director of evangelism at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson.

The attendance total includes the Sunday evening worship service, three sessions on Monday, and a senior adult

MBCB executive director, prior to the start of the Monday evening worship service.

The session with the highest attendance was the Sunday evening service, with 485 present. The next highest was the final session on Monday evening, with 426 in attendance.

"We are grateful for the response of Mississippi Baptists to our invitation to be a part of this great event in the life of our convention," Lum said. "Many people left their homes early

Mississippi Baptist leaders say special, and events like the evangelism conference give us a great opportunity to showcase that fact through praise and honor to God and His Son, Jesus Christ."

Conference speakers included:

■ Sammy Gilbreath, director of evangelism for the State Board of Missions of the Alabama Baptist Convention.

■ Kara Blackard, pastor of

see EVANGELISM on p. 4

Land urges Boy Scouts of America to retain policy against homosexuality

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) should uphold their long-standing moral values and protect young males by abandoning their proposed policy change on homosexuality, wrote Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, in a Jan. 31 letter to the Wayne Brock, BSA's chief executive, and Wayne Perry, BSA's president.

The BSA national board is expected to vote soon on a recommendation to enable each local scouting unit to determine its policy on whether openly homosexual minors and adult scoutmasters should be permitted to participate.

Such a change would not only represent a break with the moral values that BSA has held

for more than a century, but it could have tragic consequences for troop members, Land said. "[W]ith the admission of homosexual Scout leaders, the BSA would place men, who by their own definition are sexually attracted to men, in close, supervisory proximity to teenage boys, which invites real human tragedies.

"We are not saying homosexuals are pedophiles. However, how many parents would send their teenage daughters on camping trips with heterosexual male troop leaders? They would not — not because they believe that such heterosexual men are pedophiles, but because they realize that under such close, supervisory care

see SCOUTS on p. 7

Abortion/contraceptive mandate change not enough, opponents say

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Obama administration proposed a rule change Feb. 1 that the administration says will appease the concerns religious organizations have about the abortion/contraceptive mandate, but legal groups who defend religious liberty called the proposal inadequate and said it fell far short of what is needed.

Religious groups had hoped the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) would announce that all religious organizations including universities, hospitals, and charities are exempt from the mandate, which requires employers to carry health insurance plans covering contraceptives and drugs that can cause chemical abortions.

Churches, for example, are exempt from the mandate. Instead, HHS issued a rule it says allows for employees to obtain contraceptives and abortion-causing drugs without the religious employer taking part in the process. Religious liberty groups say employers still will be involved.

The proposal also does nothing to help businesses such as Bible publisher Tyndale House, the Christian-owned Hobby Lobby chain, or any other for-profit whose owners have religious objections to contraceptives and/or abortion-causing drugs.

"Having reviewed this proposed rule, we ...have to say we're extremely disappointed," said Kyle Duncan, general counsel of the Washington, D.C.-based Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, in a conference call with reporters.

Becket Fund has helped lead the legal charge against the mandate. More than 40 lawsuits have been filed against the mandate. Duncan called the proposal "radically inadequate."

According to an HHS website, the latest version of the mandate proposes that religious employers "would not have to contract, arrange, pay or refer for any contraceptive coverage to which they object on religious grounds." Rather, employees "would receive contraceptive coverage through separate individual health insurance policies, without cost sharing or additional premiums."

The insurance company would be required to offer the drugs for free, HHS said.

Religious organizations that are self-insured would have to

contact a third party administrator, which would "work with a health insurance issuer to provide separate, individual health insurance policies at no cost for participants."

Religious liberty groups had multiple objections to the proposal. First, the groups said, religious organizations still will be required to carry an insurance plan that is tied to coverage of contraceptives and abortion-inducing drugs.

Secondly, religious employers — particularly those who are self-insured — will be acting as "conduits" with health providers to ensure their employees can obtain the drugs. Thirdly, it's unclear who is paying for the "free drugs."

In addition, some religious commentators were asking whether insurance companies will simply raise rates and thereby pass the cost for the abortion-causing drugs on to the religious organization.

Duncan said religious organizations are "going to have to carefully consider whether this accommodation really doesn't change the moral landscape at all. It's going to be up to them to make that determination. We believe they're going to have some serious concerns about remaining unacceptably involved in the provision of these drugs and devices."

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Lives worth saving

We may not be able to prevent every massacre or random shooting. No law or set of laws can keep our children completely safe. But if there's even one thing we can do, if there's just one life we can save, we've got an obligation to try. — U.S. President Barack Obama at the Minneapolis Police Department on Jan. 4.

Dear Mr. President:

I agree with you wholeheartedly. If there's even one life we can save, we should do so. Hence I would like to make a few suggestions that would get you more personally involved in the fight for life in America.

First, you can volunteer to be a sidewalk counselor at an abortion clinic. Just pick one. This country has plenty of them, and they're real busy. You can plead over the fence with the sad and conflicted young women as they enter the clinic, alone and without support, facing the gravest decision of their lives. You can allow the tears to stream down your face as another child's life is taken in the abortion chamber, not from a madman's bullet but with the blessing of an oh-so-enlightened society.

You can stand with those who face arrest outside the clinic. You can be spit upon by those who disagree with you. You can be ridiculed and insulted by the clinic's personnel. If you come to the clinic in Jackson, you can even endure a soaking shower from the clinic's lawn sprinklers followed by a choking dose of pepper spray from the clinic's security guard.

You can be part of the modern underground railroad that saves babies from the cold steel death inflicted by the abortionists, and places them with adoptive families. You can be one of the men and women on call 24/7/365, who take in rescued babies until permanent families can be found — even if it takes months or years.

You can immerse yourself in the remarkable ministry of a crisis pregnancy center, where expectant mothers find support and encouragement regardless of their life situation, where those mothers can view a sonogram of the nascent life within,

where the abortion prevention success rate is near 100%.

You can use your considerable power as President to promote legislation that would ban abortion. That would save a lot of lives and prevent the slaughter of an additional 55 million people in this country. If you're not comfortable going that far, you could use your considerable power to, at the least, return the decision to individual states as to whether abortion is permitted.

If you can't muster the minimal courage to even do that, with a stroke of your pen you could stop taxpayer funding of abortion providers like Planned Parenthood who operate under the pretense that no federal money they receive is used for abortions.

You can order your federal Department of Health and Human Services to drop the abortion/contraceptive mandate that forces religious institutions against their will to pay for birth control and abortion-causing drugs. In its place, you could order your Department of Health and Human Services to ban abortion counseling and the dispensing of free birth control drugs and abortifacients at junior high schools and high schools across the country.

You can call a press conference surrounded by children, since you frequently speak of children as our future. You can announce that you are securing the future of our country's children — and the country itself — by taking action to end the curse of abortion.

Mr. President, stand up for life. Save the innocent being led to their deaths. Speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. Defend the defenseless.

Now, that would be a presidential legacy worth remembering.

Lessons from 1707

Back in 1707, a well-known Christian author and independent thinker named Isaac Watts published a song which has become a staple hymn for generations. Marching to Zion was a masterpiece of hymn writing. As a child, I learned the words to this beautiful and inspiring melody.

What escapes many people is that, in the second verse, Watts inserted a line which was (at the time) highly controversial. "Let those refuse to sing," it went, "who never knew our God!" Churches during this period were embroiled in a controversy over whether church music should consist only of straight Psalms, or should include hymns.

Often, church members would walk out or stubbornly refuse to participate when hymns were sung. It remained a controversy for many years to come.

When I first began my ministry in 1949, the idea of actually paying a staff member other than the pastor was a new one, especially in small churches. Now, this profession has become an established part of most churches. This is but one change among many. In the past few years, we have seen what seems to be an increasingly-rapid change in our worship experiences. Some of these have been accepted easily, others not so much. Examples include the introduction of praise songs, the elimination of hymnals in favor of digital screens, and the use of praise bands.

Often, these issues become defined in terms of generations. "Older folks just don't understand what it takes to reach youth these days," say young people. "Young people have lost touch with our traditions," say some older folks. They are both right, and both wrong!

Through the years, I have seen churches divide over what seemed to me like the most petty of issues. Satan must delight in such things, because they divert the church's attention away from its primary mission. The Great Commission clearly compels us to focus, above all else, on sharing the life-changing Gospel truth of Christ with the world. Any other concerns are secondary.

Jesus knew that His people could be vulnerable to division and attack by the enemy. I don't think it is a coincidence that, before His arrest and crucifixion, Christ prayed that his church would "be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you." - John 17:21.

Christ's Church is created by and infused with the Holy Spirit. It is a living organism, which can and should change with the times yet must never, ever lose its primary focus of reaching the lost.

I must confess that it took me a long time



Guest opinion

with Thomas A. Moak Jr.

to be comfortable with what I used to refer to as "canned" (recorded) music. When singing solos, I prefer to be accompanied by a pianist (preferably Willa, my beautiful wife of nearly 58 years). Being able to direct choral groups accompanied by piano and organ has been one of my great joys in life.

However, I must also admit that I have been deeply moved at times by contemporary music. There are many Christian artists out there who are using all forms of musical expression to touch lives for Christ. It's not all my cup of tea, but as long as they are true to Scripture, and are responding to the Holy Spirit, it doesn't have to be.

In my humble opinion, dear reader, we must decide whether we are going to continue trying to reach the lost in a world which needs Christ more than ever. We could stand on tradition with our arms crossed, and let the current generation go its own way — or we could watch the joy on young faces as they express truths from the stirring of the Holy Spirit within them.

Older folks may have learned our own "praise songs" from a shape-note hymnal but to us, they are how we express our own love for God. We often have valuable lessons to teach, but regardless of whether we are young or old, or our styles are traditional, contemporary, blended, or whatever, we must all make sure that our messages and actions are grounded in Scripture.

The next time you come across that great old hymn, remember that although our world may be unrecognizable from that of Isaac Watts, the truth of Christ has not changed whether it was 64 years ago, or 300, or 2,000. Our only choice is whether we are going to carry out our mission or not.

I say we carry on!

Moak and his wife Willa have served at numerous churches in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Tennessee during 64 years of ministry. The Moaks live in Bogue Chitto and attend First Church, McComb.

THE Baptist Record

Editor

William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

Associate Editor

Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

Layout/Design

Megan Young
myoung@mbcb.org

Advertising

Emily Jones
ejones@mbcb.org

Circulation Manager

Bronda Quattlebaum
bquattlebaum@
mbcb.org

Editor Emeritus

Don McGregor



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Baptist Record Advisory Committee:

Dwayne Parker, Flora
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Russell Mord, Sturgis

Send news, communication, and address changes to: The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@
mbcb.org

Postmaster:
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Groups watching marriage cases at Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (BP) — Support by religious citizens of laws affirming traditional marriage in the wake of the advance of same sex marriage in the U.S. does not make those measures unconstitutional, the Southern Baptist Convention's ethics entity and other organizations have told the U.S. Supreme Court.

In two friend-of-the-court briefs, the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville joined the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and other religious groups in urging the high court to rule in favor of a federal law and a state amendment that define marriage as between a man and a woman.

The briefs, filed Jan. 29, are in cases for which the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments March 26 and 27 and likely issue rulings before its summer adjournment.

The Supreme Court's much-anticipated decisions in the cases could prove momentous in an ongoing national debate, resulting in either the legalization of same sex marriage or the affirmation of laws protecting traditional marriage.

The ERLC, NAE, and others urged the court in one brief to overturn the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals' invalidation of Proposition 8, a 2008 amendment approved by California voters that defined marriage as between a man and a woman. In the other brief, they called on the high court to reverse the Second Circuit's ruling against a section of the Defense of Marriage Act that also defines marriage in federal law as only a heterosexual union.

ERLC President Richard Land said the briefs seek to "combat anti-religious discrimination." Such discriminatory treatment by courts "would seek to disqualify the votes of people of religious conviction or to say, 'If your vote was based on religious conviction, it's somehow disqualified from the debate,'" Land told Baptist Press.

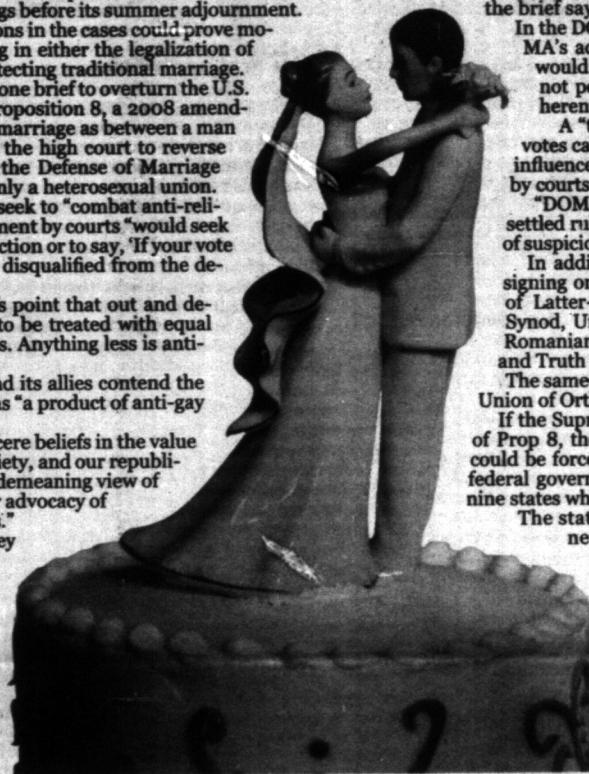
"That's anti-religious bigotry, and these briefs point that out and defend the right of people of religious conviction to be treated with equal value with those who don't have such convictions. Anything less is anti-religious bigotry by any other name."

In their brief in the Prop 8 case, the ERLC and its allies contend the Ninth Circuit unjustly depicted the amendment as "a product of anti-gay animus," or hostility.

Support for the proposition was based on "sincere beliefs in the value of traditional marriage for children, families, society, and our republic can form of government," the brief says. "Only a demeaning view of religion and religious believers could dismiss our advocacy of Proposition 8 as ignorance, prejudice, or animus."

The ERLC and the others say in the brief they "are united in condemning hatred and mistreatment of homosexuals." They believe "God calls us to love gays and lesbians" while defending traditional marriage, they say.

Prop 8 "must be judged on its merits according to settled rules of law — not on a more demanding standard born of antipathy toward religion or religious believers," according to the brief. "That Proposition 8 was supported by some religious voters or is in harmony with some religious views is constitutionally irrelevant."



Heightened scrutiny of a law by a court "because of its support by religious voters or its relation to religious beliefs would raise serious First Amendment concerns," the ERLC and the others argue. "Increased scrutiny could result in the disenfranchisement, or at least dilute the voice, of religious voters."

The brief acknowledges Prop 8 "takes sides in the moral debate over same-sex marriage" but says such a value judgment cannot be escaped.

"California's endorsement of traditional marriage as a policy preference does not transgress constitutional limits any more than the thoroughly moral judgments expressed in laws regulating obscenity ... or abortion the brief says.

In the DOMA brief, the ERLC and its allies contend using DOMA's adherence to "traditional moral and religious beliefs" would contradict previous Supreme Court rulings that do not permit government to treat religion and religious adherents as subversive.

A "taproot of American citizenship would be damaged if votes cast by the religious — or by their representatives when influenced by religious values — were evaluated more critically by courts than other votes," the brief says.

DOMA is entitled to be judged on its merits according to settled rules of law — not on a more demanding standard born of suspicion toward religion, religious believers, or their values."

In addition to the ERLC and NAE, the other organizations signing onto the Prop 8 brief were the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, Romanian-American Evangelical Alliance of North America, and Truth in Action Ministries.

The same organizations joined in the DOMA brief except for the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations.

If the Supreme Court agrees with the lower court's invalidation of Prop 8, the 41 states that do not recognize same-sex marriage could be forced to do so. If it agrees with overturning DOMA, the federal government would have to recognize gay marriages in the nine states where it is legal.

The states that have legalized same-sex marriage are Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Washington, and Vermont. Gay marriage also is legal in the District of Columbia.

California voters approved Prop 8 after the state Supreme Court had legalized gay marriage earlier in 2008. Congress passed DOMA, and President Clinton signed it into law, in 1996.

The Prop 8 case is Hollingsworth v. Perry, while the DOMA case is United States v. Windsor. Oral arguments in the Prop 8 case will be March 26, while they will be March 27 in the DOMA appeal.

First Person: Human trafficking a reality all around us

By Dewayne Hastings
Correspondent

Every year in the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl, a perfunctory story or two appears in the press predicting an increase in sex trafficking in the city where the game is to be played.

This year is no different and even though statistics on the prevalence of trafficking in New Orleans and other Super Bowl host cities are difficult to come by, the reality is that illegal trade of human beings for commercial sex exploitation and forced labor is a real and present issue every day in most cities and towns across the country.

Contrary to what most Americans may think, it is not isolated to lesser-developed nations. Even if people are not being trafficked in your hometown, there is a fair chance the shirt you are wearing at this very moment may have



HASTINGS

been made in a factory where people were enslaved.

An estimated 27 million men, women, and children are enslaved around the world. The U.S. Department of State says between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the U.S. each year. Many of these individuals are brought from Thailand, Mexico, the Philippines, Haiti, India, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic.

Around 20% of all trafficked individuals are children.

In many cases, victims are lured to another nation or area with promises of a good job or opportunities to support their family. These promises are merely ploys to get them to a place where they can be held against their will and exploited. In other cases, children are in effect sold to traffickers by families living in dire poverty in order to secure a source of income.

In a briefing on the U.S. State Department's 2012 Trafficking in Persons report in June, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton explained, "Traffickers prey on the hopes and dreams of those seeking a better life." According to the United Nations, human trafficking is recognized as the third most profitable international crime endeavor, topped only by illegal drugs and arms trafficking.

What about the connection between the Super Bowl and sex trafficking? It's obvious that where people are gathering in large numbers, the demand for such illicit trade increases as does other criminal behavior. It is a sad but real-life illustration of the economic model of supply and demand.

The New Orleans area, as a port city and popular tourist destination sitting astride major interstate highways, already is a haven for sex trafficking. The continuing tragedy is that once the National Football League championship is decided and fans have returned to their homes, those trapped in slavery will remain behind.

Yet anyone in the U.S. can join in the battle against this modern-day human tragedy. For instance:

■ Be vigilant by being aware of people working in certain industries, including factories, restaurants, hotels, construction, and agriculture.

■ Take note of those who appear to have no contact with their family, no access to identification documents, whose movement is tightly controlled by others, who move frequently, who work excessive hours, and have unusual work restrictions.

■ Trafficked individuals may have injuries or signs of physical abuse, be malnourished, have few personal possessions,

avoid eye contact, and be hesitant to speak to strangers.

■ Don't assume that just because you don't live in a major metropolitan area people are not being trafficked in your community. Commercial sex exploitation and forced labor is an issue where state lines and national borders have no meaning.

For any reasonable suspicion that someone is being trafficked, promptly call (888) 373-7888, a national hotline operated by the Polaris Project of the National Human Trafficking Resource Center.

For Christ-followers, the obligation is even greater to be attuned to this issue. We must go above and beyond in caring for our neighbor (Matthew 22:36-40); to stand in the gap for the poor and needy (Proverbs 31:8-9); and to see every person as being of inestimable value and worthy of redemption (Genesis 1:26).

For more information on the human trafficking issue, visit polarisproject.org, notforsalecampaign.org, love146.org, and enditmovement.com.

Hastings is a vice president at the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. He may be contacted at dhastings@erlc.org.

It seems as though every day you can hear on the news or in just personal conversation discussions taking place reminding us that life that God has created and given to each of us is a precious thing. The Supreme Court ruling 40 years ago known as Roe v. Wade in which the Supreme Court in essence said, "That it is the right and prerogative of a woman to decide whether she wants the life within her to be given birth or death." Their decision has for these four decades allowed life to be dispensable at the decision of the mother and with the help of medical personnel to end a life at its beginning. Over 50 million of those legal abortions have been carried out during these four decades.

Since it has been given legal approval in the minds of many, it is just accepted as a part of our culture. But on the other hand, there have been more and more people who have come to an awakening and are wondering what are we doing and what kind of nation are we living in that life is no longer considered precious. Only weeks ago we were reminded by the mass killings at a school in Connecticut that at least for one young man the lives of teachers, administrators, and 20 precious little children were considered insignificant. That rampage event began with a young man taking the life of his own mother and ending with him taking his own life. It set off a firestorm of conversation about gun control and mental health needs in our land with little or nothing being said about our nation focusing on the sanctity of an individual's life given by God.

No doubt that young man had serious issues raging in his life, but I have wondered if there was ever a time and a place at home, school, or in a church when he heard that his life and the life of everyone around him was a precious gift from God and that the sanctity of life is to be revered. It is a strange world that we live in because some times and in some ways we will go to any and all lengths to save a life. I think about



With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Life Is Precious

those wonderful and amazing neonatal care units in hospitals where 24 hour a day monitoring care takes place to help a preemie or a child born with difficulties survive. Families will spare no expense and modern medicine will do everything possible to give that precious life a chance. In those events where every minute matters, we will have medical teams and helicopters ready to get someone where they need to be to receive the help they desperately need in order to live. Ambulances and medical quick response teams remind us that life is precious. From a biblical view, would you take just a few moments to think about how significant life is?

Life comes from God. The Genesis account of creation states it so beautifully when it says, "God breathed into his nostrils; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Throughout the entire Bible the affirmation comes again and again that life comes from God. We do not exist apart from Him. We did not create ourselves, and we cannot even sustain ourselves apart from Him. How long can you live without food? At best, it will be a few short weeks. Without water you can live only days. Without oxygen you can survive only minutes. Without the firing mechanism that

causes your heart to pump you can count the time in seconds. For every one of us the source of life, the sustenance of life, and the span of life is God given. Over the years the more that I have come to understand that to be true the more I have celebrated day by day another day of life, another gift from the hand of God to live, to move, and to have my being.

Life not only comes from God it is directed by Him. God has a plan for your life. Just the mention of that causes some people to react and say, "I am not going to be a preacher or a missionary." The fact is that His plan can encompass every one of us wherever He has placed us to live and to serve. It may be that He places you in an area of medicine or in the military. He may place you in that strategic place as a mom to impact generations to come. You may be a truck driver, teacher, pharmacist, physical therapist, office worker, Opry singer, logger, or a literary craftsman and God can use you. Where would most of us be if it were not for those skilled people who provide for us a place of shelter and security? Just think of those who have the gifts and use their working skills as plumbers, electricians, builders, and roofers. The

list can be into the thousands. As you think about these folks, remember the times that you have run into someone in these disciplines and many other areas of work and your life has been blessed, encouraged, uplifted, rescued, and restored by someone with a great caring spirit that seemed to be wrapped around whatever it was that they were doing.

You can find these folks who it just seems obvious that the plan of God is for them to be there. They stand out maybe in the legislature or the law. You can find them in science, sports, and in schools. God does have a plan for their lives and they make a difference in all of our lives. God reminded the prophet and the people in Jeremiah 29:11, "I know the plans I have for you." As a nation we need to return to the glorious truth, teaching, and spiritual climate that would encourage and help people to find God's plan for the life He has given.

Not only does life start with God and is sustained by Him but ultimately as His creation we will return to Him. It is a sobering reality that we will give an account of ourselves to God. Sometimes in our churches we teach and preach about stewardship as though it was some kind of check writing exercise. While financial stewardship and responsibility is vitally important, the sum total of who we are and what we do in faithfulness to God is the substance of which we will give an account. The way that we act and react, our words, our actions, and our attitudes all come under the scrutiny of our Creator. Life is precious and significant not because God is looking over our shoulder but because He has made us to be blessed and to be a blessing. Your life is precious! What are you doing with it? Even more importantly, what are you allowing God to do with your life?

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mcb.org.

Letters to the Editor

*Unsigned letters will not be printed.
Multi-copy and form letters will not be printed.*

Each correspondent must include a home address and home telephone number for verification. Cell phone numbers are not acceptable. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing. Correspondents must refrain from personal attacks, offensive characterizations, and political partisanship. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

There is no guarantee that an individual's letter will be published. No more than one letter from an individual will be published during a six-month period.

When in the judgment of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with that issue will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Editor:

I am writing in response to a column entitled, Tee It Up, by Jimmy Porter, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission, that was published in the Jan. 24 issue of The Baptist Record. The statement was made, "Our schools have been broken for years so something must be done." Some of the schools in Mississippi are labeled as "failing" and some "low-performing." That does not mean that all schools are broken. Many

schools do an outstanding job educating children every day. By far the majority of school teachers and school administrators that I know are strong, Christian leaders in our churches and communities.

May I suggest that intercessory prayers be lifted up for our Mississippi schools and the people who work in them. We need to continue to see our schools as God sees them, and help them in all the ways we can.

*Derwood L. Tutor
Tupelo*

EVANGELISM

cont. from p. 1

Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth.
■ Junior Hill, evangelist from Hartselle, Al.

■ Bob Pitman, retired pastor and evangelist from Muscle Shoals, Al.

■ Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Seminary.

■ Michael Catt, a Pascagoula native and pastor of Sherwood Church, Albany Ga.

Praise and worship was provided by Eddie Sirven and Derrick Cowan of First Church, Richland; the church's Celebration choir; First Five; Dave's Highway; Forgiven; and a combined choir from local Baptist churches.

Hill issued a warning in his message, which was drawn from the parable of the sower and the seeds in Luke 8. "Satan is going to do all he can to take the seed away from the sower. He wants the sower to feel bad and out of place in the world because he sows. Unless God supernaturally moves in our culture and does something, one day young pastors who preach morals will end up in prison."

Kelley touched on a similar theme in his message. "We are a harvest-oriented denomination living in the midst of an unseeded generation. We are

working window boxes instead of behaving like farmers working in the fields. The problem is not that we don't witness to our neighbors. The problem is that we don't look like Jesus."

Lum said attendees left the conference filled with the Holy Spirit and more prepared than ever to help bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus. Everett Childers, senior pastor of Wade Church, Moss Point, was one of those people.

"The singing and the preaching spoke to my heart and I was greatly encouraged," Childers said. "I came home 'fired up' and went witnessing the Thursday night following the conference. I had the privilege of witnessing to a seven year old boy who trusted Jesus as his Lord and Savior."

Lum said he has received a number of such positive reports since the conference adjourned. "I am grateful to God for moving among us and using the conference for His glory."

Lum also noted with appreciation the hospitality offered by the staff and members of host First Church, Richland. "They really rolled out the red carpet for us. We couldn't have asked for a better facility and any more outstanding fellowship at the dinner they provided."

The annual Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference

is sponsored by the MBCB Evangelism Department and funded by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program. The 2014 conference will be held Jan. 26-27 at Northcrest Church, Meridian.

Editor's note: Associate Editor Tony Martin contributed to this article.

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

House Tops.

Matthew 10:27 NIV

February 7, 2013

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.



FEBRUARY 28, 2013
6:30 - 8:30 P.M.
**LONGVIEW HEIGHTS
OLIVE BRANCH, MISS.**

MARCH 2, 2013
9 A.M. - NOON
**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
RICHLAND, MISS.**

Learn how to challenge kids to face their fears and trust God as they zip along the roller coaster of life. Through every twist and turn, we'll examine how to help them live with a spirit of power, love, and sound judgement.

VBS materials will be on display and available to purchase from LifeWay Christian Resources.

An overview of LifeWay Curriculum, Worship Rally, Crafts, and Snacks

Training Sessions for Evangelism, Promotion, and Decorations

For more information contact Angie Boydston at aboydstun@mbcb.org or Jo Wasson at jwasson@mbcb.org or call 1-800-748-1651, ext. 292, or 601-292-3292
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205

2013 Week Day Education

February 9
8 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Highland BC, Meridian

March 2
8 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Ridgecrest BC, Madison

Registration in advance required:
Cost \$15 per conferee

Checks for registration fees should be payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Center Directors, Pastors, & Children's Ministers accompanying their teachers are FREE.

4 hours of Health Department Approved Training

Discipleship and Family Ministry
PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205
dhicks@mbcb.org

LifeWay Architecture
Compelling environments for ministry

March 19, 2013
Skyroom, MBCB Baptist Building
8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Provide key leaders with quality church facility information.

Registration requested. Please contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Dept., 1-800-748-1651, ext. 305, 601-292-3305 or cwtaylor@mbcb.org.

STATE PREACHING CONFERENCE

April 22 — Mississippi College, Clinton
led by Wayne VanHorn

April 23 — Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain
led by Ronald Meeks

April 24 — William Carey University, Hattiesburg
led by Daniel Caldwell

The book of Revelation — “Together for Christ”
8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Contact **Keith Gordon** for more information,
1-800-748-1651, ext. 307, or 601-292-3307.

Registration requested

Pastor/Leadership Development Department

PASTORS & WORSHIP LEADERS WORKSHOP

“Together for Christ in Worship”



Alan Woodward



March 4, 2013

Agricola BC, Lucedale

9 am - noon



Slater Murphy

Led by Alan Woodward, director of the Pastor/Leadership Development Dept., and Slater Murphy, director of the Church Music Dept., MBCB

Registration requested. Please contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Dept., 1-800-748-1651, ext. 305, 601-292-3305 or cwtaylor@mbcb.org.

MISSIONS
WEEKEND
EVENT!

FOR ALL GIRLS
7TH-12TH
GRADES AND
THEIR LEADERS

Ignite
GARAYWA CAMP &
CONFERENCE CENTER

Cost: \$58

For ages 12-18
Program fee, room
and board, Lodging, meals
Contact Tammy Anderson
601-292-3307 or tanderson@mbcb.org

Telling the
Story of

Jesus

March 22-23, 2013

Church Library
Ministry Retreat

Garaywa Camp and Conference Center
Clinton, Miss.

8:30 a.m., March 22 - noon, March 23

For more information contact Judy Chen with the Communication Services Dept. of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at: 601-292-3378 or jchen@mbcb.org



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SPRING Senior ADULT RALLIES

2013

Tuesday, March 12, Monticello Baptist Church
Archie Herrin, 601-441-3954

Tuesday, March 19, Northcrest BC, Meridian
Buddy McElroy, 601-938-8668
(buddymcelroy@bellsouth.net)

Thursday, March 21, FBC, Biloxi
James Haynes, 228-396-8500
(amatheny@fbcbiloxi.org)

Monday, March 25, West Jackson Street, Tupelo
Jim Harrington, 662-256-8778
(monroe41@bellsouth.net)

Tuesday, March 26, First Baptist Church, Flora
Gil Powell, 601-879-8022
(gilpowell@fbcflora.org)

Tuesday, April 9, First Baptist Church, Batesville
Barry Worrell, 662-226-5316
(barry@emmanuelbapt.org)

Thursday, April 11, First Baptist Church, Louisville
Billy Bowie, 662-773-6246
(billy@fbclouisville.com)

Thursday, April 18, First Baptist Church, Natchez
Talmadge Smith, 601-835-6639
(tamandmollysmith@yahoo.com)

Garaywa Camp & Conference Center, Clinton
10 a.m. Monday - 4 p.m. Tuesday

Registration is required.

For more information, contact Cathy Taylor, 1-800-748-1651, ext. 305,
or 601-292-3305

Pastor/Leadership Development Department



**MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST STATE
MINISTRY ASSISTANTS CONFERENCE**

APRIL 8-9, 2013

"So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbringings."
Romans 14:19 (ESV)

SINGLE ADULT SUMMIT

For Leaders/Sunday School Teachers/Ministers

Tuesday, March 5, 2013
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Golden Triangle Baptist Association
560 Willowbrook Road, Columbus

Renowned motivational speaker and author:
Dr. Moses Caesar, Texas
(Born in India)

Handouts and special door prizes included.
We will be glad to help with your gas expenses.

To make reservations for the meal contact:
662-328-6802 or
goldentriangleba@bellsouth.net

2013 SENIOR DAY RETREATS

12:30-5:30 p.m.

"SENIORS – Heed how you hear the Word!"

Luke 8:18

Harrisburg BC, Tupelo

May 21

Preacher:

Jim Futral, MBCB

FBC, Vicksburg

May 23

Preacher:

Argile Smith, Pineview, La.

FBC, Picayune

May 30

Preacher:

Clarence Cooper, Brandon BC

Registration Cost: \$5 at the door or one week before the registration date to receive the gift bag. Mail Registration to: MBCB Conference Office, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530 or call Jo at 800-748-1651, ext. 292

Pray this day for...

February 8 – February 21, 2013

"Pray without ceasing"

-1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray for: **Janna*** Smith, IMB missionary ministering to American Peoples in Mexico through church planting.

Pray for: **Lane*** Vance, IMB missionary ministering to European Peoples in France through evangelism.

Pray for: **David*** and **Regina*** White, missionaries ministering to American Peoples in the U.S. through church planting, church and community outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Floyd and Sylvia*** Wingo, missionaries ministering to American Peoples in Brazil through church planting, church and home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Paul and Donna*** Worsham, missionaries ministering to American Peoples in Mexico through church planting, church and home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **George and Geraldine*** Smith, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples in Uganda through church planting and church and home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Thomas*** Smith, missionary ministering to American Peoples in Peru through regional office support.

Pray for: **David and Laurie*** Bledsoe, IMB missionaries ministering to American Peoples in Brazil through church and home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for: **Donald* and Teresa*** Bolts, missionaries to Sub-Saharan African Peoples in the U.S. through agriculture and church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Matthew*** and **Megan*** Brewer, IMB missionaries ministering to European Peoples in Hungary through church/home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for: **Kaye*** Brooks, missionary ministering to American Peoples in Chile through church planting.

Pray for: **John and Claudia*** Brown, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples in Malawi through church and home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for: **Arnold* and Margie*** Austin, missionaries ministering to American Peoples in Peru through community outreach, church and home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for: **Richard and Mertha*** Beat, missionaries ministering to American Peoples in the U.S. through financial administration, church and home outreach evangelism.

*These International Mission Board missionaries claim Mississippi as their home state. The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 2-4 year terms or in career service.

april SAVE THE DATES!

Missionary Parents Fellowship

Dates: Friday, April 19 – Saturday, April 20, 2013

Time: April 19, 2 p.m. – April 20, 12:30 p.m.

Location: Garaywa Camp & Conference Center, Clinton

15

22

Mississippi Missionary Fellowship

Date: Saturday, April 20, 2013

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Location: Garaywa Camp & Conference Center, Clinton



BIVOCATIONAL & SMALL CHURCH MINISTERS & WIVES RETREAT

April 18-20, 2013

Mississippi Baptist and William Carey University will host the National Bivo/Small Church Celebration.

Pastors and wives across the nation will join with us in fellowship, inspiration, and affirmation.

For reservations contact Cathy Taylor, 601-292-3305, cwtaylor@mbcb.org, or Dale Holloway, 601-845-2107

Mr. Drew Williams 4/1/93

Parents: Matt & Shea
Last Frontier

Mr. Ethan Milam 4/17/01

Parents: Andy & Michelle
European Peoples

Mr. Micah Milam 4/2/96

Parents: Andy & Michelle
European Peoples

Miss Sarah N.

4/21/94
Parents: Jeffrey & Judy
Restricted

Miss Brooklyn 4/6/09

Parents: J & M
Restricted

Miss Elisabeth
Savannah Johnson 4/25/07

Parents: Lewis & Brandi
Sub-Saharan African Peoples

Miss Taylor Inmon 4/25/08

Parents: Tony & Denita
American Peoples

Miss Eden S. 4/26/05

Parents: S & M
Last Frontier

Mr. Christopher Carlton

4/29/93
Parents: David & Pamela
Sub-Saharan African Peoples

Mr. Noah Carpenter 4/5/04

Parents: James & Tracy
Restricted

Miss Lindsey Williams

4/27/01
Parents: Matt & Shea
Last Frontier

Related March:

Miss Abigail Hewitt 3/15/97
Parents: Earl & Romana
West Africa

Mr. Asa S. 4/11/12

Parents: S & M
Last Frontier

Mr. Benjamin White 4/16/12

Parents: David &
Regina
American Peoples

Miss Bethani Thomas

4/28/93
Parents: Jeff & Karen
South America

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: Child's name, Parent's name, MBCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.

PLEASE NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.

Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.

BAPTISTS

HOUSE TOPS

BIBLIOCRYPTER

LAX HCP LADPB GLOX EAHR CPK, YPLK

ARH, QLKJ: YRK HCRE CLGH YREAX

YLMREK FOHC DRX.

BEVP RAP: HCOKHJ

Clue: R = O

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: *Mark Six: Six*

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

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Whoever follows me will not walk
in darkness but will have the
light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer
with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins
and freedom from eternal
death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose
from the grave to forgive my sins
and to restore my relationship
with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ
into my life. From this time on,
I want to live in a loving relationship
with Him. (I receive Christ as
my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave
the right to become children of God, even to
those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a
local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

MS POSITIONS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, NETTLETON IS SEEKING A PART-TIME STUDENT PASTOR. Please send resumes to: First Baptist Church, Attn: Student Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 427, Nettleton, MS 38858.

CEDAR GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH, COLUMBIA, MS IS SEEKING A PART TIME MUSIC MINISTER. Please send resumes to Cedar Grove Baptist Church, 44 Cedar Grove Road, Columbia, MS 39429 Attn: Personnel Committee or call 601-736-4655 ext 601-736-4655.

PLAINWAY BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A PART TIME YOUTH MINISTER. If interested, please send resume to Plainway Baptist, 1133 HWY 15 N., Laurel, MS 39440 or plainwaybaptistchurch@gmail.com. Phone 601-426-8605.

WHITESAND BAPTIST CHURCH, PRENTISS, MS, IS SEEKING A PART-TIME WORSHIP LEADER/ADMINISTRATOR OF MUSIC. Resumes may be sent to whitesand4952@windstream.net or Whitesand Baptist Church, Attention: Search Committee, 159 Whitesand Church Road, Prentiss, MS 39474. Fax 601-792-8475.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, UNION, MS IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND EDUCATION. Please mail resumes to First Baptist Church, Attention: Search Committee, PO Box 128, Union, MS 39365. You may also e-mail resumes to jon@fbcuonline.net.

PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHURCH, 1180 EATONVILLE ROAD, HATTIESBURG, MS IS IN SEARCH OF A PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT. If interested, please mail resumes to Providence Baptist Church, Attn: Marc Taylor, 1180 Eatonville Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39401.

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, GREENWOOD, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC. Resumes may be emailed to ibcibalt@att.net or mailed to ATTN: Ronnie Bush, Immanuel Baptist Church, 916 Medallion Dr., Greenwood, MS 38903.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, MCALPIN, MS IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME YOUTH MINISTER. Please send resume to McAlpin First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 69, McAlpin, MS 39456.

PINE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL "ASSOCIATE PASTOR/YOUTH MINISTER". Please send resume to Pine Grove Baptist Church, 126 Gither Johnson Rd., Magee, MS 39111.

FULL-TIME PASTOR, FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH, STURGIS, MS. The church is located in Southeast Oklahoma County, the home of Starkville and Mississippi State University. Resumes and nominations may be sent to brownj@ed.mestate.edu or to Friendship Baptist Church, 5491 Craig Springs Road, Sturgis, MS 39769, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

NORTHCREST BAPTIST CHURCH IN MERIDIAN, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITION: FULL TIME YOUTH PASTOR. Responsibilities include leading students grades 7-12. Please send resumes to jobs@northcrestbaptist.com.

HEBRON BAPTIST CHURCH IN MERIDIAN, MS, IS LOOKING FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY. Will be responsible for Sunday morning and evening worship. If interested, please email a resume to hebronbaptist@bellsouth.net or mail to Music Search Committee, 4795 Vimville Causeyville Rd, Meridian, MS, 39301.

OBITUARY



MILEY

Richard A. Miley Sr., 77, of Oak Grove died Dec. 26 at Oxford Health and Rehab of Forrest County. He served as a minister at New Home Church in Madison, Fl., Richburg Church, Hattiesburg, and Beacon Church, Hattiesburg. He was a member of Temple Church, Hattiesburg, and served in the Mississippi National Guard.

Miley was preceded in death by his parents, William and Clemmie Miley; sisters Corine Akins, Myrtle Small, and Maude Tate; brothers Billy Miley and William "Dub" Miley Jr.; half sister, Fannie McMurry; and half brother, Chester Miley. He is survived by his wife, Bobbie Jean Miley of Oak Grove; two sons, Richard Miley Jr. (Marcia) of Purvis and Matthew Daniel Miley (Marissa) of Spokane, WA; a daughter, Joanna Joyce King (Joe) of Purvis; sisters, Elizabeth Wilkes of Petal and Eddie Carol Lewis of Hattiesburg; brother, Louis Miley of Sumrall; six grandchildren; and a great-grandson. Funeral service was December 31 at Temple Church, followed by burial in Hillcrest Cemetery. Moore Funeral Home in Hattiesburg was in charge of arrangements.

CLASSIFIEDS

AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS: GULF SHORES & ORANGE BEACH, AL. Rent direct from Christian Family Owners, Lowest Prices on the Beach. www.gulfshorescondos.com <<http://www.gulfshorescondos.com>>, 251-550-9421, 205-556-0368, 205-752-1231.

THE FCC WILL SOON ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FOR LPFM STATIONS. Expand your church ministry. 318-428-4664 or e-mail buzzdavis@hughes.net

STUDENT MINISTER: Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia, Alabama, is currently seeking a full-time student minister to work with 6th grade through college age students. Please send resume to Student Minister Search Committee, Southside Baptist Church, 1213 W. Bypass, Andalusia, AL 36420, 334-222-4300.

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College News

In College News:

► William Carey University will host a symposium for high school and community college students interested in health care careers on February 20, from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in the Kresge Room of Thomas Business Building. Representatives from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Pearl River Community College, Jones County Community College, The University of Southern Mississippi, WCU, and WCU College of Osteopathic Medicine (WCUCOM) will lead breakout sessions to present information about the programs they offer. To register, call (800) 962-5991, ext. 103 or (601) 318-6103.

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AND MEMORY

DECEMBER 6-15, 2012

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Charlie & Polly	Farlow	Bubby Troclair	Bobby & Elaine
Morrow	Tina Latapie	Mr. & Mrs. Gino	Watkins Family
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Farlow	Julee McDaniel		Charles & Jo Tillman
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Billy & LaJuanna Harrison	Mrs. Anne Mae Purdy	Etheleen J. Blanton	Bill Horton
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FBC Soso, Lydian SSC	Mr. & Mrs. J. L.	Vicky Swalm	Ann Keen
David Haworth	Farlow	Mr. Wayne Burrell	Jamie C. Earls
FBC Vicksburg, Adult	Tommy Riley	Jimmy & Jo Jenkins	Dickie Kilby
7-B SSC	Mr. & Mrs. J. L.	Alvin Campbell	Patsy & Odie Smith
Mrs. Libby Hill	Farlow	Pat & Betty Ruth	Katherine Kilby
Bruce Hill	Leigh Ann Robertson	Mr. & Mrs. Delton Campbell	Patsy & Odie Smith
Fred'a Hobgood	Cecil & Penny	Linda Campbell	Versie Kilpatrick
FBC Vicksburg,	Washington	Mr. Truman Carr	Gore, Kilpatrick &
Deborah SSC	Neoma Robertson	Sylvia & Thomas	Dambriño, PLLC
Ray, Ann-Hoover, Lucas &	Cecil & Penny	Humphreys	Greg King
Sawyer Hopkins	Washington	Nelson Chisholm	Oliver King Family
Robin & Cathy White	John & Joyce Sadler	Hattie Mae Johnson	Golda H. Koenig
Amy & Jay Hutton	Jack & Annabelle	Noah Charles Christmas	Bob & Jeannie Chunn
Candy & Ken	Rev. & Mrs. Dennis Salley &	John & Mary Hobbs	Royce Lamb
Anderson	Family	Mrs. Inez T. McCain	Mr. & Mrs. J. L.
Felicia Jacobson	Charlie & Polly	Jamie & Jenny Smith	Farlow
Joan McKellar	Morrow	Chic & Peggy	Ross Latapie
Mr. & Mrs. Newton James	George R. Sigrest	Chicorelli	Mr. & Mrs. J. L.
Bob & Sandra Kyzar	Doris W. Neely	Bruce & Maria	Farlow
Mr. & Mrs. Lamont Jarrell	R. L. Sigrest	Johnson	Mr. James Roscoe Lee
Dr. & Mrs. B. C.	Doris W. Neely	Rev. & Mrs. Jimmy	Bobby & Elaine
Wolverton	Dr. Elizabeth Smith	Breland	Watkins Family
Mrs. Ernestine Jefcoat	Mr. & Mrs. Eugene	Bruce Clifford	Mrs. Gloria Leggett
FBC Soso, Lydian SSC	Lanier	Shirell Stuart Betts	Bobby & Elaine
Mr. & Mrs. William Justice	Mr. & Mrs. Petey Smith	Harry L. Cole	Watkins Family
Jean & Ron	Bob & Sandra Kyzar		
Yarbrough			

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR FEBRUARY 10, 2013

Let the Verdict Be Read! • Amos 8: 11-12; 9: 8-15

Generally speaking, I believe most adults realize they cannot control the future. They plan for it, anticipate it, and work toward it, but in their limited vision, they cannot foresee everything that the future holds for them. When unexpected events occur in their lives and disrupt their carefully laid plans, they often find themselves in the grip of feelings of hopelessness. Many adults find themselves not knowing where or to whom they can turn. It is during these times when many adults are open to hearing about God and His Sovereignty over life events, thus their future. They are also open to believing that God is good and can be trusted to bring about a just and hopeful future for His people. In our passage today we will look at the last two visions that God gave to Amos and close our study of the book of Amos with a look at God's announcement of restoration of the faithful remnant of His people. In the midst of the imminent judgment of God we find that true hope rests in God alone.

Trust Comes by Hearing (Amos 8: 11-12)

In Amos 8:1 we hear the words of God spoken to Amos in his fourth vision. God shows Amos "a basket of summer fruit,"

signifying that the end has come for the children of Israel. God restates His indictment against His people. He speaks to those who "trample on the needy and do away with the poor" (8:4 HCSB) and says, "I will never forget their deeds." (8:7 HCSB) As if these words are not sobering enough, in Amos 8: 11-12, God declares that during their time of judgment that they will seek him and call to Him but He will

not answer. There will be a famine in the land; not a famine of food or water, but a famine of the word of God. How often we find ourselves feeling hopeless and in need of a word from God, and when that word does not come we begin to doubt. Instead of doubting what we should be doing is relying on the promises God has already made known to us. No matter how we feel, we are not alone. We have heard the truth of God and we can gain strength from that truth whether it is words of correction or guidance.



Explore the Bible with Huey Dedmon

Sovereignty Cuts Two Ways (Amos 9: 8-10)

Amos' fifth vision is cast with the "Lord" (v.1) standing by the altar. In verse 8 we see the words "Lord God" used by Amos. These are the Hebrew words Adonai Yahweh. The

use of these names of God speaks to the sovereignty of God. All throughout our study of Hosea and Amos we have seen the sovereignty of God displayed. While God is a just God and must punish the sins of His children, He is also a loving God who stands by the faithful. He pronounces His judgment on "the sinful kingdom" which represents the sinful religious and political systems of the day, and He announces His mercy on the "house of Jacob" which represents a surviving remnant of God's covenant people. Because God is sovereign He can choose to punish those who are willfully living a disobedient life, and in the midst of that punishment display His love, grace and mercy

on those who are faithful to Him. We should gain confidence from the fact of God's sovereignty because when we choose to obey God rather than give in to the temptation to disobey Him, we know He will show us His mercy.

True Hope Rests in God (Amos 9: 11-15)

As we move toward the end of the book of Amos we cannot help but reflect on the strength and magnitude of God's words of judgment on His sinful people. Over and over again Amos warns of the coming consequences of their blatant disregard for God's instructions for living just and holy lives. But in the midst of the warnings of judgment we also have words of hope. In Amos 9:11-15, the last words of God are words of hope and restoration. The redemptive purpose of God shines through like a candle in a dark room. True hope for the future rests in God and God alone. We must remain faithful to Him no matter what others are doing around us.

Dedmon is Associate Pastor for Education/Outreach at Brandon Church, Brandon.

The Character of Leadership • 1 Timothy 3:1-16

How do you spell "walk?" God spells it "c-h-a-r-a-c-t-e-r." The way you walk out your life speaks volumes about who you really are inside. You cannot be a "care actor" and be found genuine. True colors always shine through. Mustard is yellow. Ketchup is red. Mayonnaise is white. Pickles are green. Even when you might THINK you have fooled even your closest human connections, God knows. God sees and best of all, God cares. He cared enough to send Jesus to show us how to live. Jesus' final teaching lesson was washing feet.

This month, our focus is on the "five trustworthy sayings" found in the personal letters of Paul which were written to his sons in the faith, Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete. These three letters are called "pastorals" since they were written to these two young pastors straight from the heart of God through the ministry of Paul. "Pastor" means shepherd of the scattered sheep.

God was concerned for the strong development of these newly-born first century churches and their leaders and members. The seed of the gospel had been sown by the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and promised return of Christ. The eyewitnesses of His life were doing their best to nourish this gospel seed as it began to grow and flourish. As the

churches were established, it was vital that the leaders AND the members would seek to live lives that were above reproach. Contrary to contemporary belief, God has not relaxed His stance on this issue.

In the letter to Timothy, through the quill, ink and parchment of Paul, the Holy Spirit delineated the qualifications of church leadership. 1 Timothy 3:1 records that it is a trustworthy saying if any man aspires to

the leadership office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. Ministry certainly has its heart breaking moments, but I cannot think of any other work that could be more fulfilling. Working hours are 24/7/365 with funeral-interrupted vacations, but the retirement plan is out of this world.

The overseer is the pastor of the church. The deacons are the servant leaders in the church. In both roles, the call of God is assumed. Not everyone in the fellowship is

called out to be a leader, but all are called to be servants of Christ, one another and the world.

For overseers and deacons, the work begins in the heart of the leader with evidence of their personal relationship to God through Christ. The work continues

inside the walls of the home that the leader represents. Family relationships are their primary mission field. The state of the home and

family is a good indication of the ability of the man to lead well in other arenas. Community reputation (character) must be above and beyond reproach. There should be no actions which would give the home, the church family or the lost community reason to doubt the true character of these leaders. Churches are immediately rendered void of their effectiveness when they spring a leak in their character bucket.

Why is this so vitally important? We

find the answer in verses 14-16. Paul desires to come for a visit to the church at Ephesus. In case he can't make it sooner than later, Paul writes to Timothy to insure that leaders are chosen who will see that church health and growth are assured and not sabotaged. The church was not just another community organization. The church is the household of the Living God. The church is the foundation and fountain of truth in a dark world. In Revelation two and three, the church leaders are called angels or gospel messengers. The brightest light cannot shine through a soot-filled life.

"Let the preacher do that! Ain't that what we pay him for anyhow?" I wish I had a nickel for every time I have heard that attitude expressed. Somewhere along the way, we have forgotten that every believer is to be a faithful servant of the Lord, not just the pastor. Would you love to be a member of a church where every person in the family saw their role as servant? Maybe it's the preacher's kid in me, but I have always been discouraged to see that folks expect more from the pastor and his family than they expect from themselves and their families. Leaders and followers are equally accountable to the Lord.

Brown is the staff evangelist at First Church, Richland.

SCOUTS

cont. from p. 1

of men who by definition are attracted to women, human tragedies could, and inevitably would, occur."

Such a policy change would result in huge losses among Scouting units, Land predicted. "Ultimately, this decision, if adopted, would lead to

a mass exodus of traditional faith congregations from the Boy Scouts, including many Southern Baptists, who presently account for a sizeable percentage of sponsoring Scout units and members."

About 70% of all Scouting units are owned and operated by faith-based organizations. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) leads all religious organizations

with 38,000 units and 420,000 participating youth, followed by the United Methodists (11,000 units; 371,000 youth) and the Roman Catholic Church (8,570; 283,000). Baptists are sixth (4,100; 109,000).

Land joins other Southern Baptist leaders who have expressed disappointment with and opposition to the BSA proposal. Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Church

in New Orleans, and president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville, already have spoken out against the possible change.

Page urged Brock, Perry, and another official in a Jan. 28 conference call not to change BSA's sexual orientation policy. "I believe this will be a death blow to Scouting...

I think this is a self-inflicted wound," Page said.

Critics of the BSA proposal said it would be difficult for Scouting units that agree with the current national policy to maintain that policy for themselves. Troops that retain the ban on homosexual leaders "would experience increasing pressure to capitulate on their convictions," Land said in his letter.

Just for the Record



PRENTISS COUNTY ASSOCIATION held a discipleship rally at **MT. OLIVE CHURCH, BALDWYN**, Jan. 27. Kenneth Leslie, minister of music at Mt. Olive, led a combined choir of 54. Bert Harper, guest speaker; Ben Parman, AMD; David Haynes, pastor.



FIRST CHURCH, HICKORY FLAT, licensed Blue Mountain College students (from left) Duncan Schaefer, Justin Anderson, and Jesse Taylor to the ministry. They are shown with pastor Gary Linville.



FIRST CHURCH, LEAKESVILLE, licensed Chris Stafford to the gospel ministry as a music and youth minister. Stafford had served part-time as youth minister since January, 2012 and then as interim music minister from September to December 2012. He is shown with his wife Katie and pastor Billy Dowdy, presenting the certificate of license.



FELLOWSHIP CHURCH, ELLISVILLE, recognized Wayne Smith for his years of serving the church as deacon. He was ordained in 1968. Shown are pastor Tracy Freeman and Smith.



BOLTON CHURCH, BOLTON, ordained Bobby Maulden as deacon Jan. 13. Shown are pastor Jackie Banes, Maulden, and Cathy Maulden.



DORSEY CHURCH, MOOREVILLE, held a baby dedication Oct. 7, 2012. Shown are Clint, Chloe, Kayla, and Charlie Blanchard.

In other Church News:

► LifeWay and the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board will be hosting three regional preview and age-group training events - March 18 (Ridgecrest Church, Madison), March 19 (Carterville Church, Petal), March 21 (West Heights Church, Pontotoc). Visit <http://blog.lifeway.com/biblestudiesforlife/fieldtest/download> to preview some of the materials in the updated resource.

► High Hill Church, Neshoba Association, will host Ronnie Cottingham in music worship Feb. 17, 11 a.m. Love offering. Don Cook, pastor.

► The Warren Association and the Madison Parish Baptist Association will host a Wildlife Extravaganza on February 23 at the Vicksburg Convention Center. The event, "Celebrating the Creator and His Creation", is free. Randy McPherson of Mathew's Archery will be the featured speaker. Over forty vendors will be present featuring all aspects of hunting and outdoors equipment and gear. Activities will be held for kids. Daniel Sumerall will conduct a Black Bear Research in Mississippi seminar at 11 a.m. and Dwayne McLemore of Steel Outdoors on Managing for Trophy Whitetails at noon. At 1 p.m. Terry "The Snake Man" Vandeventer will discuss Snakes in the Magnolia State. McPherson will make his presentation at 2:30 pm, discussing hunting and sharing the Gospel. The doors open at 10:00 am and the Extravaganza concludes at 6 pm. The website for this event is www.warrencountywildifeexpo.com or found on facebook.com/wcwildlifeexpo.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either e-mail, CD or DVD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.